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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
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RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN PRIORITY 9711  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 000727

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DEPT FOR P, AF, AF/S, DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/07/2018

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SUBJECT: ZUMA ADVISOR APPEARS AT A LOSS REGARDING ZIMBABWE

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Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. On 7 April Mo Shaik, one of ANC President Jacob Zuma's advisors, met with PolOff to discuss current thinking within the Zuma camp regarding the Zimbabwe crisis. Contrary to media hype surrounding Jacob Zuma's meeting with MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai on 7 April, Shaik portrayed the Zuma camp as being in a "wait-and-see" mode. Shaik also criticized both the ANC Youth League's criticism of the process, calling them "irresponsible," and the MDC for declaring early victory. Shaik believes a run-off should be avoided at all costs and that a transitional government that does not include Mugabe is the only answer. Shaik, however, was unclear about how Zuma could influence the process, admitting that Zuma does not have any more leverage over Mugabe than Mbeki does. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) PolOff met with Zuma advisor Mo Shaik on 7 April to discuss current thinking within the Zuma camp regarding Zimbabwe's crisis. Shaik opened by boldly stating that we were seeing a "tectonic shift in Zimbabwe, where for the first time we can see the past and the future." Shaik's optimism quickly disappeared when asked what the ANC's strategy was, giving the distinct impression that the Zuma camp at least does not have one. When PolOff asked about the neutral tone in ANC's statement regarding the elections, especially given the ANC Youth League's (ANCYL) public criticism of the process, Shaik asked petulantly what the US expected the ANC to say after SADC observers declared the election free and fair. He also called the ANCYL's statement "irresponsible." His criticisms were also directed at the MDC, questioning why they declared victory and pointing out that it was dangerous to allow opposition parties to tally their own votes. "Right now, we can't say either Mugabe or Morgan got a majority so all we can do now is wait." Shaik admitted that Zuma does not have any more leverage over President Mugabe than Mbeki does. Shaik also confirmed that Zuma is in contact with MDC officials, but not with ZANU-PF officials. (NOTE: Press reports note that Tsvangirai met with Zuma, Sydney Mufamadi (Minister of Local Government and member of Mbeki's negotiating team on Zimbabwe), and business leaders on 7 April (septel). END NOTE)

¶3. (C) Immediately after the results are posted, Shaik believes the MDC should work with ZANU-PF to form a unity government, with "the only non-negotiable part of the equation being Mugabe's removal." Despite constitutional

requirements, Shaik believes a run-off should be avoided at all costs because it will likely be rigged and lead to bloodshed. When asked how the international community could encourage this, Shaik floundered and started thinking out loud. Eventually Shaik came up with two ideas. First, Shaik believes Mugabe's inner circle must be convinced that their only option if they want a future is to join a transitional government. He had no ideas, however, as to how to plant these seeds, admitting that though Zuma has good MDC contacts, he does not within ZANU-PF. Second, "trusted emissaries like Angolan President Dos Santos, Namibian President Pohamba, UN Secretary General Moon, even the President of Spain" should negotiate with Mugabe to step down. "President of Spain" should negotiate with Mugabe to step down on the condition that he would not be prosecuted for any crimes committed while in power. (COMMENT: Shaik never mentioned South Africa or the ANC as a potential honest broker. END COMMENT) Shaik casually dismissed concerns about any precedent this would set. However, Shaik did agree that it would be an uphill battle to convince ZANU-PF members they are on a sinking ship when rigging a run-off and keeping power to themselves is still an option. Eventually he said, "Ok, so we can have a run-off, but we have to make sure there is no rigging!"

14. (C) Shaik also told PolOff that Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad recounted his recent conversation with U/S Frazer. He did not go into detail, only saying that he does not understand what the US government expects from South Africa. He then heavily criticized recent US public statements regarding Zimbabwe, saying "the UK has played its cards right and kept quiet." Shaik also criticized US sanctions against select Zimbabweans, saying the only good they did was to build solidarity amongst the more corrupt ZANU-PF leaders who now feel they are all in the same boat.

15. (C) COMMENT: Unlike previous conversations with Shaik immediately after the Zimbabwe election, Zuma's camp seems to

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have taken a step back. In spite of likely urging from COSATU and ANCYL, Shaik's hesitancy may reflect a growing realization that Mugabe is not easily influenced by anyone. END COMMENT.  
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